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Fort Warren in August, 1865, to accept the results of the war without resistance and meet conservative opinion in the North half-way on the subject of negro enfranchisement. To do this he ran the risk of being declared "reconstructed" and of losing his wide popularity. He took the stand, however, in what was known as his Fort Warren letter, that the better class of negroes should be permitted to vote, that ignorant and propertyless whites and blacks should alike be disfranchised, and that the Southern states should co-operate cordially with President Johnson in re-establishing federal relations. This letter brought to its author unlimited abuse, and for a time every politician considered it his especial duty to malign and ridicule the former Samson whose locks had been shorn by the modern Delilah. Ere ten years elapsed the Fort Warren prisoner was seen to have been the best counsellor of his time.

The last hundred pages of the *Memoirs* consist of appendixes giving reprints of Reagan's more important speeches in Congress and his invaluable public letters of 1865 and 1866. The editing of the work has been very well done.

While this book tells us a great deal that deserved to be recorded and confirms much that was not quite certain without this evidence, it does not give all or even most of the real experience of its author. The most difficult thing in the world for a writer of memoirs is to forget himself and tell truths in the interest of history that might pain people whom he loves. For the noble reticence of great men on subjects of this kind the world may be thankful and historians possibly not unthankful. In this respect Reagan is like most of his predecessors; and some very interesting things which he alone knew are buried with him.

WILLIAM E. DODD.

History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850 to the Final Restoration of Home Rule at the South in 1877. By JAMES FORD RHODES, LL.D., Litt.D. Volume VI., 1866-1872; Volume VII., 1872-1877. (New York: The Macmillan Company; London: Macmillan and Company. 1906. Pp. xx, 440; xiii, 431.)

To the ten years following 1866 Mr. Rhodes has given two volumes. Neither of these, however, is much more than two-thirds the length of their immediate predecessor, the bulky volume V. One cannot help wondering, therefore, why chapter 30, introducing Reconstruction, was put in that volume, which was already quite long enough, and which would so much more naturally have ended with the end of the Civil War. In the recasting which the entire work will doubtless have some day, one of the changes should be the transfer of that chapter to volume VI. Volume VI. could then spare some of its matter to volume VII., which, even with the long general index, is shorter than the average.

The new (or, rather, completed) title under which the two volumes appear would seem to indicate that the entire work is completed; and in a preface to volume VI. Mr. Rhodes explains that, after reflection, the year 1877, marking the end of "carpet-bag" rule in the South, has seemed to him a more natural stopping-place than the year 1885, which, as witnessing the inauguration of the first Democratic President since the war, he had originally chosen for his bourne. But the language of the preface implies that he may, after still more reflection, and after some special preparation, decide to address himself to the new themes which, from 1877 on, overshadow the sectional controversy. With that, in one form or another, he has been dealing ever since he began to write—now nineteen years ago. In a foot-note to volume VII., p. 17—possibly left there by an inadvertence—he in fact definitely promises to treat a certain topic more fully "in a future volume". It is characteristic of Mr. Rhodes that the special preparation which he thinks he needs for going on should be nothing less than "a systematic study of the history of Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries" (VI. vi). He fears that his long absorption in a particular period of our history, which takes its quality from a single movement, may have narrowed the range of his vision; and he wishes to have, in his study of more recent years, during which we have dealt with a different set of problems, whatever enlightenment one may get from the experience of European countries.

Be that as it may, whether it shall prove that the laying aside of his pen is final or only for a breathing-spell, he has chosen a good time to pause from his labors. For in 1877, with the withdrawal of the Federal troops from the South, there does come a break, a turning of the current of affairs into a new channel, as clearly marked as any to be found in our history since the Revolution; it is doubtful if we ought to except even that other break with the past to which Mr. Rhodes had already come when he chronicled Lee's surrender. That marked only the downfall of the Confederacy and the end of slavery. In 1877 we reached the end of the entire period during which American political history was mainly an affair of North and South.

These two new volumes might, in fact, if they only included chapter 30, stand alone as an account of a period which is itself fairly well defined; well enough, at any rate, to have a clumsy name of its own—"the Reconstruction period". I am tempted to characterize Mr. Rhodes's treatment of it by paraphrasing a remark which, two years ago, in this REVIEW, I was moved to make concerning his treatment of what came before. As in volume V. he finished what is on the whole our best history of the Civil War, so in volume VII. he has finished the best history yet written of Reconstruction. Unfortunately, however, the superlative does not in this second instance convey nearly so high praise as in the first. There exist several reasonably good histories of the war, but until these two volumes appeared there was no work covering

the period of Reconstruction which could be commended.¹ For trustworthy material concerning it one had to go to the documents and other original sources, to memoirs and biographies, and to monographs which deal, as a rule, only with individual states.

Mr. Rhodes's account of these years suffers—as any narrative of the period must—from the necessity he is under, more and more frequently as he goes on, to turn aside from his main theme to topics and episodes that have little or no connection with it. The new volumes suffer, too, by comparison with their more recent predecessors, for the want of a great central personality like Lincoln's. To some readers, no doubt, it will seem that they also suffer because their main theme is not so interesting as the war. But it is, at least, a less hackneyed theme; and one feels, moreover, that Mr. Rhodes is more at home in dealing with such political episodes and problems as he here encounters than he ever was in the military parts of his narrative. He is at his best when investigating and judging causes and men; not when he confronts the stirring scenes and occasions which a historian of a more artistic bent would welcome as opportunities.

His solution of the peculiarly difficult problem of order presented by his period is the simplest. Substantially, he follows the chronological order of events. He will, it is true, pursue a comparatively brief episode to its end, even though he must turn back for the beginning of the next, or to take up the broken thread of the main narrative. But he does not hesitate to break that thread. If, therefore, one would follow the course of Reconstruction uninterruptedly, one must skip certain chapters and considerable portions of others.

Mr. Rhodes has very positive views of his own about Reconstruction, and nowhere else in his entire work does he speak his mind more freely; not even when, in an earlier volume, he weighs and finds wanting all the South's apologies for "the cause". When he has followed the Reconstruction Acts of March, 1867, through the two houses of Congress, he declares (VI. 23) : "No law so unjust in its policy, so direful in its results had passed the American Congress since the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854." Nor does he spare the chief authors of the policy. "Stevens's declarations [concerning Southern outrages] are entitled", we are told (VI. 24), "to no credence. He hated the South and desired to crystallize his feeling of hatred into legislation." "Ostensibly in the interest of freedom", his policy was, in truth, "an attack on civilization" (VI. 35). Sumner, whose claim to the authorship of the provision for negro suffrage Mr. Rhodes concedes, is acquitted of vindictiveness, but convicted of egregious unwisdom in neglecting the central factor in the problem. On the vital question of race, he would have done well, Mr. Rhodes points out, to consult one of his most intimate friends; for as early as 1863 Alexander Agassiz,

¹ I do not think Professor W. A. Dunning's work, in "The American Nation" series, has yet seen the light. To that volume scholars interested in Reconstruction look forward with high expectations.

looking at the matter as a scientist, could find no good reasons to believe the negroes fit, and many reasons to believe them unfit, for the high privileges and duties of citizenship which it was now proposed to thrust upon them. When the whole wretched story of the dominance of the negro and the "carpet-bagger" has been told, Mr. Rhodes, so far from modifying his judgment, seems to be searching for stronger words in which to restate it. "No large policy in our country", he concludes, "has ever been so conspicuous a failure as that of forcing universal negro suffrage upon the South" (VII. 168).

He tells the story plainly and straightforwardly, as his wont is; mainly by the use of specific facts and episodes and instances; undramatically, and not without stiffness and clumsiness; but convincingly. One can hardly believe that it will not some day be told after a fashion that will take it into literature, but meanwhile no one need any longer neglect it for want of a trustworthy and not unreadable version. It is interesting to observe the writer's own deep interest in it, and the thoroughly human way in which, as he goes on, he finds himself more and more in sympathy with the Southern people; a sympathy which culminates in the approving citation of Senator Hoar's well-known tribute, and which is reflected in a striking phrase in the summing-up at the end of the book—"the oppression of the South by the North" (VII. 290). This is an attitude which is far less likely to provoke criticism at the North than it would have been ten years ago. At the South, one fancies, it may help to win for Mr. Rhodes's work an attention which its thoroughness and fairness ought to have won for it before.

But I have not meant to imply that the interest of these volumes all centres about Reconstruction. On the contrary, I incline to think those parts the most readable in which Mr. Rhodes turns northward, for episodes like the fight with Tweed in New York City; or westward, or to our foreign relations, or to unsectional political questions like those of finance and the tariff. I am decidedly of opinion that he does not turn westward often enough; that he makes too little of the resumption of the westward movement after the war. So far is he from giving to the building of the Union Pacific Railroad the epical character with which Robert Louis Stevenson and others have invested it that he tells the story of it only by way of explaining the Credit Mobilier scandals. The spreading of a network of railroads over the entire West, which followed hard upon the completion of the first transcontinental line, he discusses only as the chief cause of the panic of 1873. Less space is given to the westward movement in all its phases than to weighing the evidence for and against the integrity of James G. Blaine; and this, I think, is an instance of a distaste for economic history which may be set down as one of the author's limitations. It must be confessed, however, that the handling of the Blaine controversy is a most admirable instance of Mr. Rhodes's straightforwardness and firmness of hand. Admirable

also, and in the same way, is the chapter on the disputed election of 1876.

Some minuter criticisms suggest themselves. I think, for instance, that in the account of the final break between Grant and President Johnson, in 1867, Mr. Rhodes is far too lenient to Grant. Perhaps he has not seen a revival of that controversy in the *New York Herald* (May 27, 1878), and a contribution then made to it from the diary of Gideon Welles. But to mention such instances in which one dissents from Mr. Rhodes's views would be misleading. In a far greater number of instances, I feel sure, intelligent readers, particularly if they have some familiarity with his material, will find themselves sur-rendering preconceptions to accept his judgments.

There is nothing about these new volumes to suggest any fresh discussion of Mr. Rhodes's way of writing history. In style, they are uniform with their predecessors. It is true that I have twice, greatly to my surprise, detected Mr. Rhodes in something that looks decidedly like phrase-making. Grant, while President, accepts the gift of a horse and buggy "with oriental nonchalance". The city of Geneva is the "staid chamberlain of mighty issues" (VI. 375). But in general what has been said of the earlier volumes is as true of these. They have the same quality of heavy, awkward strength. There is the same absence of fine writing, and the same freedom from any striving after it; the same apparent disregard of form in paragraphs; rather more sentences than usual, perhaps, that are clumsy with a clumsiness which one perfectly understands, instead of being skilful with the kind of elaborate cleverness which one frequently fails to understand; and there is, if anything, an even heightened contempt for punctuation marks, particularly for the comma.

The index is by Mr. David M. Matteson.

WILLIAM GARROTT BROWN.

Four Centuries of the Panama Canal. By WILLIS FLETCHER JOHNSON. (New York: Henry Holt and Company. 1906. Pp. xxi, 461.)

A JOURNALIST'S history; so attested by the contents, the style, and even by the preface. Years of service as a newspaper correspondent have given Mr. Johnson much familiarity with the Isthmian Canal project during the past decade. It was a simple task to recast, recapitulate, "read up" the past, and make a history. If the book had been named according to its emphasis rather than according to the extreme limit of dates covered, it had better been called "Four Years of the Panama Canal." The first 396 years are treated in the first third of the book, and the events of really less than four full years fill the remaining two-thirds.

Mr. Johnson made a book of what he knew, and in some cases of what he thought he knew. The mature, thorough, patient, scholarly historian has not yet busied himself with the Canal, or for that matter,